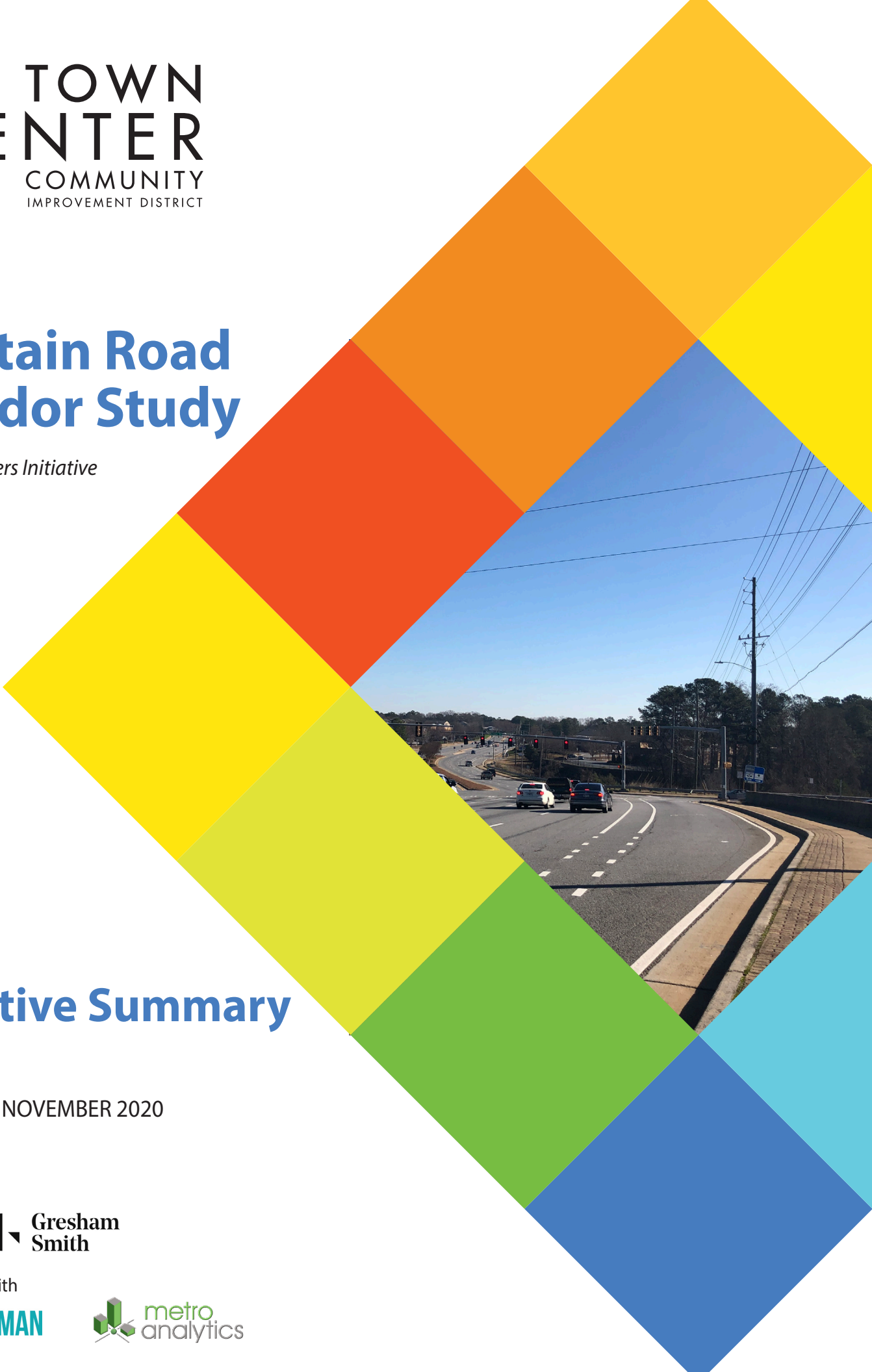




Chastain Road Corridor Study

A Livable Centers Initiative



Executive Summary

NOVEMBER 2020

Prepared by



In partnership with



LCI Corridor Study Overview

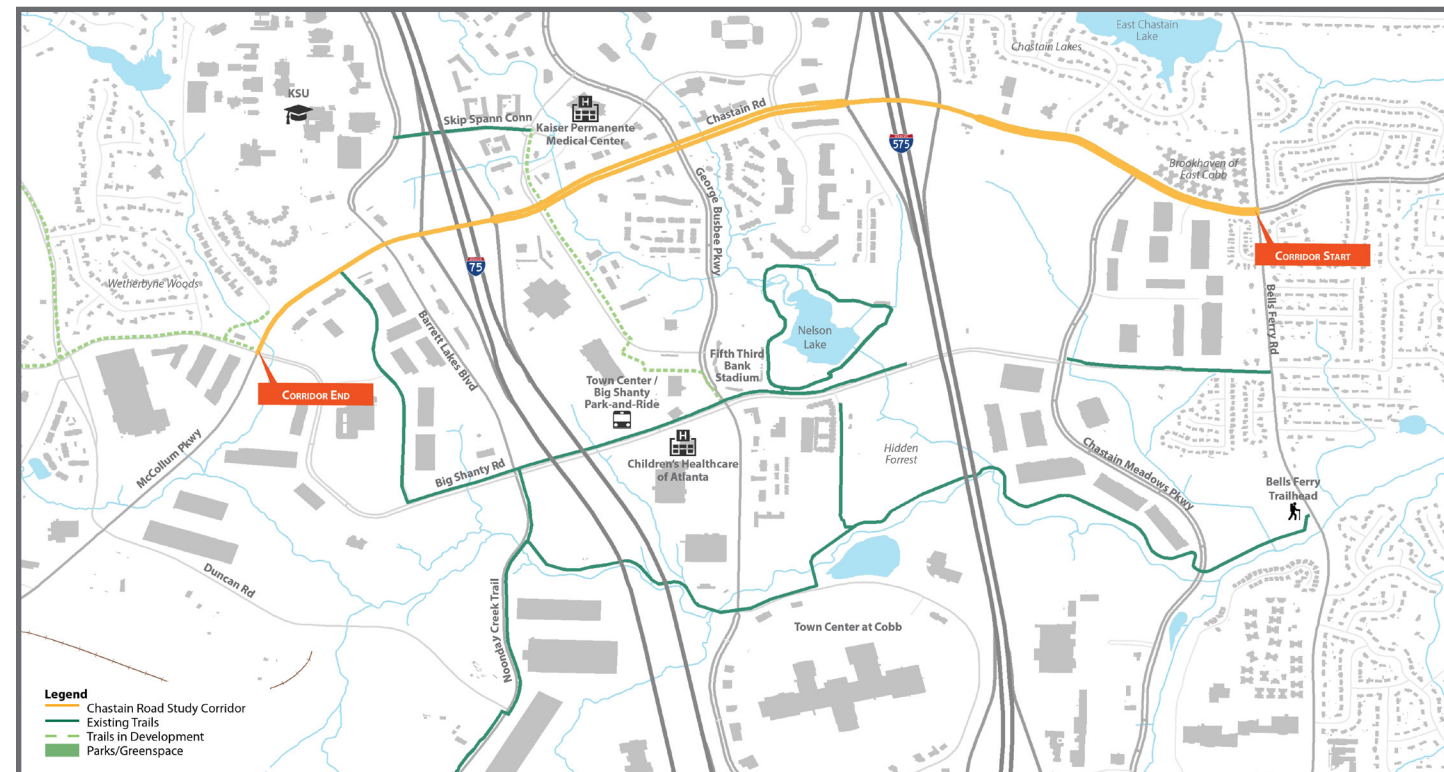
Background

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has provided funding for the Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study through the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program. The LCI program provides communities with grant funding to re-envision their communities as vibrant, walkable places with transportation options that encourage healthy lifestyles and provide better access to jobs and services.

Built upon a strong foundation including the 2017 Town Center Master Plan Update (a 2020 update is ongoing), TCCID's Design Guidelines, and the Noonday Creek Trail, the Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study sought to analyze existing conditions along the Chastain Road corridor within the Town Center Community Improvement District (TCCID) in north central Cobb County. These conditions were then analyzed to identify opportunities to make the corridor more inclusive and people-oriented to capitalize on the presence of Kennesaw State University (KSU) along the corridor. In addition to improving safety and mobility, the Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study recommends concepts for enhancing the streetscape and signage to help activate the corridor and create a more cohesive sense of place. In addition to TCCID studies and projects, the study is grounded

in plans and projects undertaken by Cobb County, such as the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which guides future land use and development, and the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), which guides transportation investments across the county and within TCCID. Collaboration with KSU along with other key stakeholders also helped in developing a vision for the corridor. The study considers and evaluates potential redevelopment opportunities and recommendations for improvements to safety and walkability in support of the LCI program.

The purpose of the study is to develop a future vision for the corridor and identify strategies that will improve the safety and efficiency of all modes of traffic along Chastain Road, with a focus on creating a walkable environment and identifying catalysts for vibrant, public-oriented development. The study also aims to formulate concepts for streetscape and design, and for signage and wayfinding, while incorporating "smart" technology. The recommended improvements encourage the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles in, through, and around the Chastain Road corridor and will enhance the look and feel of the corridor, contributing to a sense of place and helping position it as a destination.



Chastain Road in Relation to Area Landmarks

Process Summary

Stakeholder and public engagement played an important role in the identification of needs, the development of the corridor vision, and the refinement of project recommendations. The project started in January 2020 and will conclude in December 2020. With most of the project's timeline occurring during the 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the project team had to adapt to ensure equitable outreach to and input from stakeholders and members of the public. This was done primarily through engagement of a Stakeholder Committee, which met four times over the course of the study and two virtual public meetings. Feedback was gathered through an online interactive map to locate points of concern and opportunity. The project team also conducted an online Lunch and Learn session on placemaking with the Town Center Community Alliance. The report further details the measures taken to solicit feedback that molded the corridor's goals and vision and the recommendations that will help achieve them.

The study addresses a range of needs along Chastain Road as a key corridor in the Town Center area, with regard to mobility, safety, and connectivity, as well as streetscape design and economic redevelopment. Based on an assessment of existing conditions, needs, and opportunities to improve mobility, safety, and connectivity on Chastain Road, this study identifies and evaluates a broad range of multi-modal improvements and recommends a series of short-term, mid-term, and long-term projects and strategies that can be advanced for implementation. The study also includes an economic market analysis to assess supply and demand for various uses and evaluate the potential for redevelopment along the corridor, including key opportunity sites. In addition to intersection improvements, the study makes recommendations to enhance the streetscape, implement pedestrian-scale signage and public space, and integrate smart technology to create a more cohesive sense of place along the corridor.



Stakeholder Committee Members Participate in Walkshop

Key Findings

- The core part of the study corridor is designated as a Regional Activity Center (RAC), which provides for areas that can support high-intensity development to serve a regional market.
- Of the total office inventory within TCCID, 48 percent is Class A and 48 percent is Class B.
- Investments in multimodal facilities, such as the Noonday Creek Trail and future Busbee Trail are improving connectivity within TCCID.
- While overall retail inventory has declined within TCCID since 2010, vacancy rates were at a ten-year low at the end of 2019.
- The study corridor is mainly characterized by strip commercial development and parking lots; there are more than 44 acres of surface parking within 500 feet of the study corridor.
- As of 2020, there are approximately 24,400 people who work within TCCID, compared to just 12,000 who live there.
- Buildings tend to be set far back from the roadway: some commercial buildings are as many as 150 feet from the curb.
- Crosswalks across intersections along Chastain Road are up to 160 feet in width, which is not comfortable for the average pedestrian.
- All traffic signals along the study corridor are actively managed as part of Cobb County's adaptive traffic system. They are also all included in the Regional Connected Vehicle program and will be equipped with Dedicated Short-Range Communication (DSRC) roadside units, enabling use of connected vehicle applications.
- The study corridor has an average crash rate higher than the statewide average for urban minor arterials: 1,572 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles compared to 629 statewide.
- Without proposed improvements, eight of the 15 intersections analyzed will operate at a failing level of service (LOS E or F) by 2045.

Goals & Vision

Goals

Working closely with TCCID staff and the Stakeholder Committee, the project team developed an overarching vision and goals to guide development of the Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study. The corridor's vision statement and goals focus on creating a walkable environment and identifying catalysts for vibrant, public-oriented development, they serve as a foundation for recommended projects and strategies. The vision and goals helped inform the identification of potential improvements and development of recommended projects, strategies, and actions. The seven goals include the following:

- **Connect People and Places**
- **Improve Safety and Operations**
- **Create a Sense of Place**
- **Preserve Ecological Resources**
- **Increase Economic Vitality**
- **Leverage Technology to Improve the Experience Along Chastain Road**
- **Build a Sustainable Framework**



Vision: A Place to Be

In the future, Chastain Road will be a vibrant, seamlessly connected and walkable corridor that links Kennesaw State University to Bells Ferry Road and is lined with a diverse mix of thriving offices, retail, dining, and entertainment establishments.

Walking, biking, and driving are safe and comfortable, with dedicated space for everyone and greenery buffering sidewalks from the road and parking lots. It is easy to access the regional trail system.

Students and office workers enjoy lunch at nearby pocket parks and flock to pop-up markets and festivals on summer evenings.

A lively hub of activity day in and day out, Chastain Road will be more than a place to go, it will be Town Center's place to be.

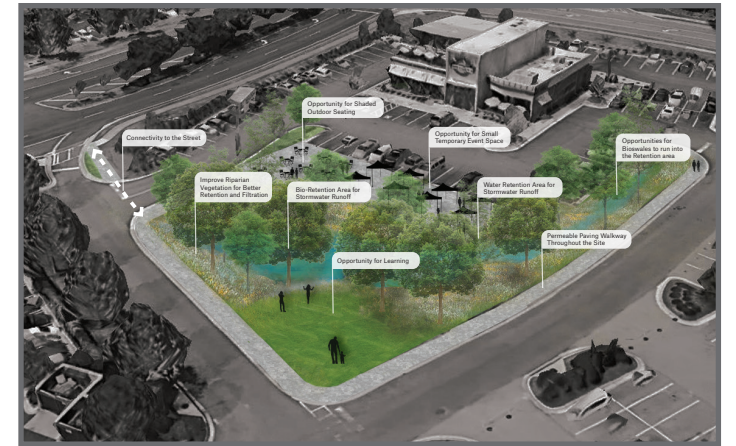
Corridor-wide Recommendations

Summary

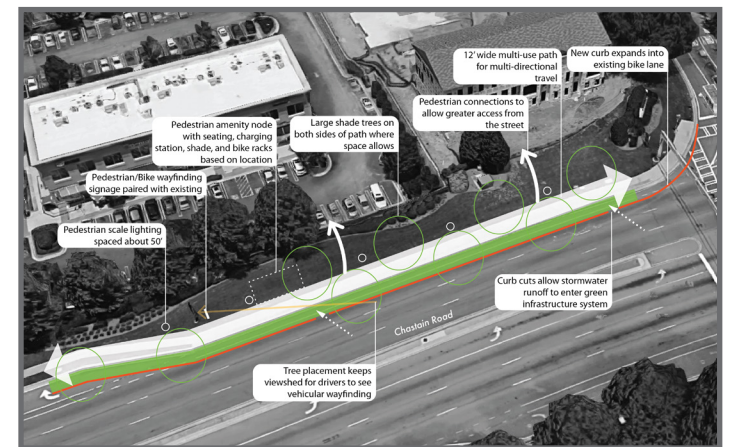
The Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study proposes a series of recommendations based upon the findings and analysis of existing conditions, current and projected traffic volumes, best practices, and input from stakeholders and community members. This study focuses on the segment of Chastain Road between Big Shanty Road and Bells Ferry Road, where Cobb County's Comprehensive Plan and future land use map have designated a combination of institutional (Kennesaw State University) and industrial uses in the western portion of the corridor; a regional activity center in the central portion of the corridor; and a combination of community activity center and residential uses in the eastern portion of the corridor. To improve connectivity along the entire corridor, the project team compiled a set of recommendations that are applicable to the entire corridor rather than only specific intersections or locations.

Corridor-wide recommendations and overarching strategies are listed below. They apply to the entire corridor or are recommended at multiple locations throughout the study area. Additional details on these can be found in the final report.

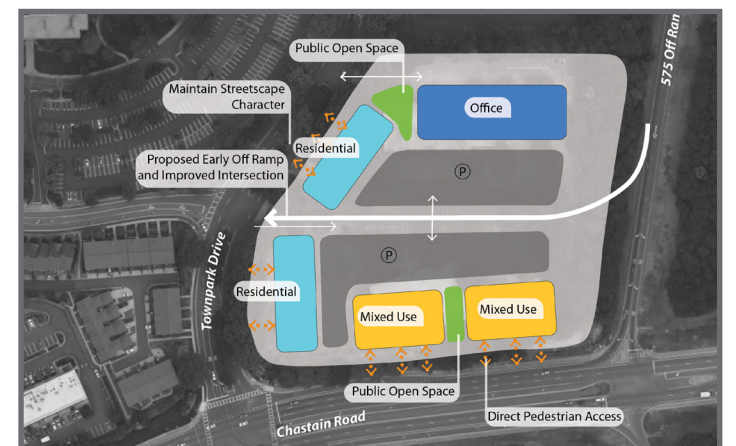
- **Improve Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety and Connectivity**
- **Provide Consistent Streetscape**
- **Better Utilize Public Open Space**
- **Provide Pedestrian-Scale Signage**
- **Incorporate Green Infrastructure**
- **Promote Community Activation**
- **Encourage Redevelopment that Promotes Walkability**
- **Deploy Technology to Improve Safety and Efficiency**
- **Provide Public Art**



Illustrative Concept for Stormwater Park and Public Open/Green Space Along Chastain Road, Such as at Tin Lizzy's at TownPark



Illustrated Concept of Streetscape Recommendations



Illustrative Concept for Potential Reconfiguration of Underutilized Parcels at Chastain Road and Townpark Drive

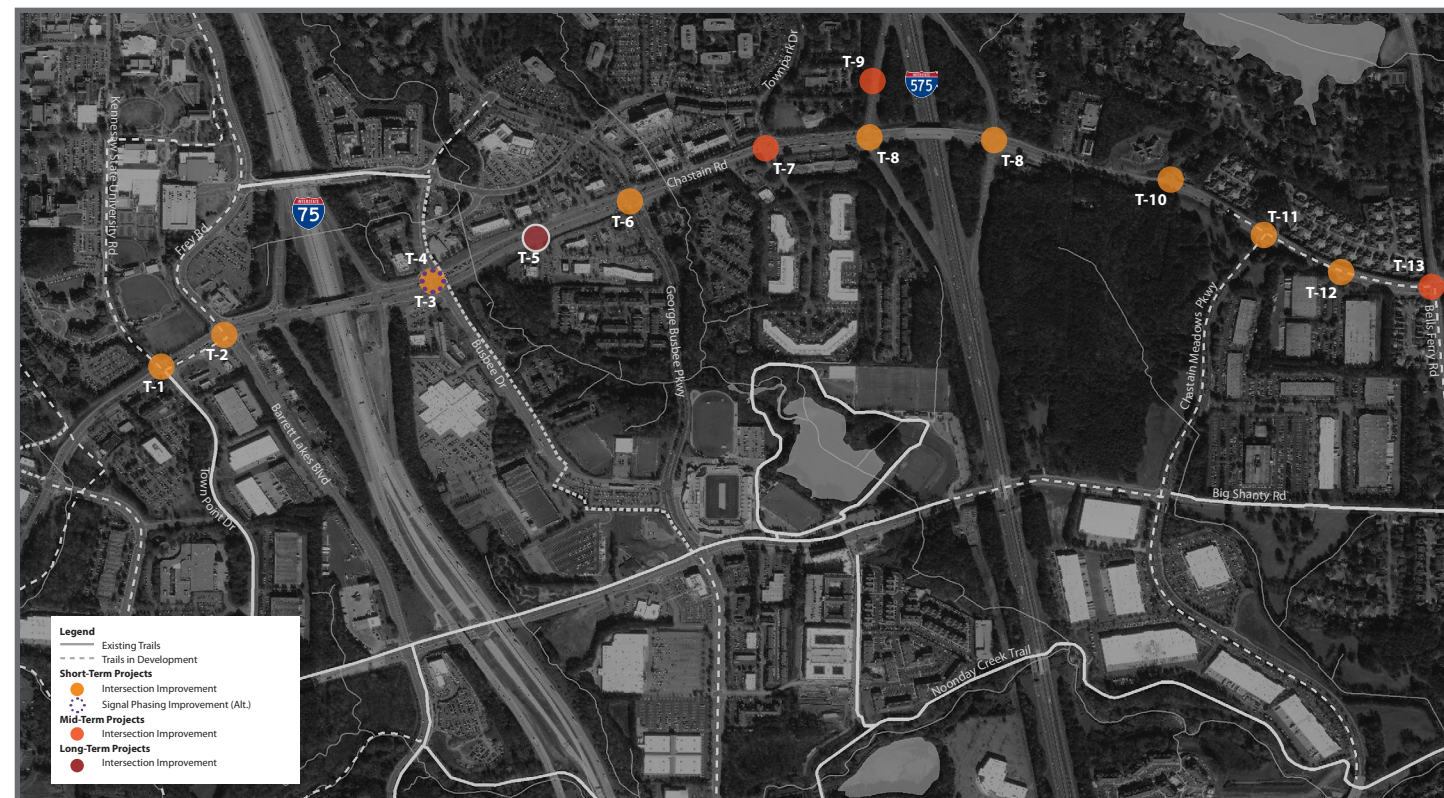
Implementation Plan

Transportation & Mobility

While overall capacity along Chastain Road is not seen as a key concern, issues related to weaving movements, limitations in sight distance, the close spacing of signalized intersections, and access management are among the issues identified by the project team in consultation with Cobb County DOT, TCCID staff, and the Stakeholder Committee. Based upon these observations and the findings of the traffic analysis, the project team identified a series of intersection improvements throughout the study corridor. Recommendations range in scope and scale, addressing issues from turning movement capacity to signal phasing and intersection geometry.

The Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study recommends thirteen projects which primarily consist of intersection improvements along the corridor at both signalized and unsignalized intersections. Specific improvements recommended at these locations include adding turn lanes, traffic signal phasing improvements, new intersection controls, implementing median U-turns (MUTs) and restricted crossing U-turns (RCUTs), and improving pedestrian crossings. Nine projects are short-term, three are mid-term, and one is long-term.

ID	Name	Timeframe
T-1	Chastain Road at Kennesaw State University Road/Town Point Drive	Short-Term
T-2	Chastain Road at Frey Road/Barrett Lakes Boulevard	Short-Term
T-3	Busbee Drive Signal Improvements	Short-Term
T-4	Chastain Road at Busbee Drive	Short-Term
T-5	Chastain Road at Chastain Commons (Driveway)	Long-Term
T-6	Chastain Road at George Busbee Parkway	Short-Term
T-7	Chastain Road at Chastain Center Boulevard / Townpark Drive	Mid-Term
T-8	Chastain Road at I-575 Ramp Improvements	Short-Term
T-9	I-575 Southbound Early Off-Ramp	Mid-Term
T-10	Chastain Road at Chastain Lakes Drive	Short-Term
T-11	Chastain Road at Chastain Meadows Parkway	Short-Term
T-12	Chastain Road at Chastain Place (Driveway)	Short-Term
T-13	Chastain Road at Bells Ferry Road	Mid-Term



Transportation & Mobility Projects

Pedestrian & Streetscape

For the purposes of identifying proposed recommended configurations of the multi-use path, sidewalk, streetscape elements, and travel lanes along Chastain Road, the study team divided the corridor into six segments, based on existing characteristics and proposed future conditions. The Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study recommends ten pedestrian and streetscape projects. These projects include expanding the curb to provide a wider planting strip and multi-use path, enhancing streetscape, developing mini-parks, and implementing pedestrian amenity nodes and pedestrian-scale signage. The final report contains illustrative cross-sections visually depicting prominent streetscape elements recommended for the corridor. Proposed improvements can be accommodated mainly within existing public right-of-way and can fit within existing bridge widths. The table to the right shows the recommended pedestrian and streetscape projects. Seven projects are short-term, two are mid-term, and one is long-term.

ID	Name	Timeframe
P-1	Chastain Road Multi-Use Path - West Segment	Short-Term
P-2	Chastain Road Multi-Use Path - Central Segment	Short-Term
P-3	Chastain Road Multi-Use Path - Central/East Segment - South Side	Short-Term
P-4	Chastain Road Streetscape Improvements - Central/East Segment - North Side	Short-Term
P-5	Chastain Road Streetscape Improvements - East Segment	Long-Term
P-6	Pedestrian Amenity Nodes	Short-Term
P-7	Illuminated Crosswalk Pilot Project	Mid-Term
P-8	Mini-Parks	Short-Term
P-9	Demonstration Project (Location TBD)	Mid-Term
P-10	Pedestrian-Scale Signage	Short-Term



Pedestrian & Streetscape Projects

Studies & Smart Communities

The Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study recommends three studies and three smart community projects. The range of projects includes additional studies to identify precise project needs and feasibility at specified locations as well as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) or Smart Communities projects, such as signage and “smart” bus shelters. Projects in this category strive to leverage cutting-edge technology to implement the corridor’s long-term vision. They will improve the ability to deliver real-time information to motorists and pedestrians, alike, and to improve the corridor experience for all users. The table to the right shows the recommended studies and smart community projects. Two projects each are recommended for implementation in the short-term, mid-term, and long-term.

ID	Name	Timeframe
S-1	Chastain Road at George Busbee Parkway Scoping Study	Mid-Term
S-2	I-575 Interchange Scoping Study	Long-Term
S-3	I-75 to I-575 Connector Feasibility Study (Undetermined Location between I-75 and I-575)	Long-Term
SC-1	Digital Kiosks	Short-Term
SC-2	Smart Bus Shelters	Short-Term
SC-3	Changeable Message Signs	Mid-Term



Studies and Smart Communities Projects

Policies & Strategies

In addition, the plan recommends 14 strategies. These represent a wide range of actions and next steps that will help clarify, refine, and advance ideas generated throughout the planning process based on identified needs and desires. They represent short-term steps that can be taken to continue the momentum in the months and years following the completion of the study as well as longer-term steps that would build upon advancements in technology or ongoing project, or that may require additional funding or new partnerships. The recommended strategies encompass placemaking, streetscape, transportation infrastructure, smart technology, and redevelopment. They are listed below and abbreviated in the Phasing Plan as ST-X.

ID	Name	Timeframe
ST-1	Small Area Policy Guidelines (Corridor-Wide)	Short-Term
ST-2	Public Art Program (Corridor-Wide)	Mid-Term
ST-3	Explore Motion Sensor Lights for Multi-Use Path (From Big Shanty Road to Chastain Meadows Parkway)	Short-Term
ST-4	Connected Vehicle Technology Deployment (Corridor-Wide)	Short-Term / Mid-Term
ST-5	Bike Share Station (Chastain Road near KSU Campus)	Short-Term
ST-6	Evaluate East End Multi-Modal Improvements (From Chastain Meadows Parkway to Bells Ferry Road)	Mid-Term
ST-7	Establish a Mobility Hub (Big Shanty Park-and-Ride Lot)	Mid-Term
ST-8	Feasibility Study of Future Pedestrian Connection Across I-575 (South of Chastain Road)	Long-Term
ST-9	Explore Pedestrian Safety Technology (Location TBD)	Long-Term
ST-10	Improve Access Management and Establish More Grid-Like Network (Corridor-Wide)	Ongoing
ST-11	Temporary Pop-up Events (Corridor-Wide)	Ongoing
ST-12	Stormwater Best Management Practices (Implement at Redevelopment Locations)	Ongoing
ST-13	Partner to Explore Opportunities for Future Automation and/or Low-Speed Electric Vehicles (Location TBD)	Long-Term
ST-14	Explore Collaborative Smart Technology Research Opportunities (Corridor-Wide)	Mid-Term

Suggested 100-Day Action Plan

- 1) Promote the accompanying online StoryMap developed to help communicate the findings and recommendations of this plan with community members in an easily understood, visual format.
- 2) As part of the redesign process for wayfinding signage throughout TCCID, develop a specific design layout for pedestrian-scale signage with travel times to key destinations/landmarks and QR codes.
- 3) As part of the planning process for launching a replacement bike share program for the recently-disbanded Zagster program, include plans for a bike share station in the Big Shanty park-and-ride lot.
- 4) Identify and initiate planning for a short-term, temporary Demonstration Project. This includes developing a checklist to guide development of the project, outlining steps for selecting the site, planning/design, outreach and notification/promotion, installation, and removal.
- 5) Identify the top three (3) project priorities and develop action plans for implementation, such as early coordination needed with Cobb County or other agencies, funding applications, and likely project phases.
- 6) Set up coordination meeting with Cobb County DOT to discuss and identify top-priority transportation and mobility projects and discuss potential funding strategies.
- 7) Meet with Kennesaw State University representatives from Campus Planning and Parking & Transportation to discuss priorities for Chastain Road; establish quarterly coordination meetings to keep things moving forward.
- 8) Set up coordination meeting with Cobb County Community Development to discuss and outline the process for creating Small Area Policy Guidelines for Chastain Road.
- 9) Meet with Cobb County PARKS Department to discuss initial steps for creating a mini-park at the location along Townpark Lane behind Taziki's.
- 10) Start preparation and gathering of project information for the top three (3) priority projects to assist with advance planning for future funding applications.
- 11) Identify a smart technology project to submit for consideration for a future round of technical and financial assistance through the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge.

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY



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